

How to study or teach Tafsīr Jalālain

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by

Ustadh

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1. The Tafsīr has been compiled by two scholars, the first been Imām Jalāluddīn Mahallī, the Ustadh of Imām Suyuti. Both were Shafī followers.
 2. Though the tafsīr is very brief, it entails very important and summarized details from a large base of interpretations since Imam Suyuti R.A. was a Muhaddith, Mufasssir, Faqih and a Scholar of Grammar of a very high caliber. He most likely surpassed his teacher in these fields as well.

Imam Suyuti did the second part of the tafsir, which his tutor left incomplete due to his death. However, the teacher began from the middle. Thus, Imam Suyuti completed

the first half in the format of the teachers tafsir. Therefore, although Imam Suyuti completed the tafsir, the actual tafsir only comes to completion with the section completed by his teacher. Subhaanallah, the grace and merit of completion still rested with the tutor.

3. Among the best prints for the purposes of studying the Jalālain, is the printed versions that are used in India and Pakistan which have a Hashiyah printed around the text of Jalālain. Two diverse prints are available. One has a Hashiyah (marginal notes) from various sources. The other print has two sets of Hashiyah around it. One set is that of Kamaalain and another is that of Jami-ul-Bayaan.

An advantage of these hand written text which have been printed in India and Pakistan is

1. that it has numerical references, beneath the text of the tafsir between the verses of the Quran, of the various Damaa-ir (pronouns) in order to facilitate a reference to specific words to allow an understanding of the text.
2. These marginal notes would sometimes include details from the Hanafi madhhab with regard to verses that were interpreted in a Shafi format.
3. The Hashiyah has plenty grammatical interpretations which are sometimes left out of the tafsir for the sake of brevity.
4. Read a few Good English translations of the Quran to get familiar with the translations of the words of the surah that you are to study.

Yusuf Ali and Marmaduke Pickthall English translations of the Quran would suffice for a start.

In fact, I do not think it advisable at all for anyone to translate any verses of the Quran without reviewing Jalalain and its commentaries

5. Attempt to translate the various Arabic words through the use of an Arabic-English dictionary, and if you are capable, it is better to use an Arabic-Arabic dictionary like Qaamoos-ul-Muheet
6. Obviously, we pre-conclude that you a student of the Shariah and have sufficiently studied Arabic grammar. Otherwise, there is plenty grammatical detail that would become incomprehensible to you. Thus, a revision of Arabic grammar rules and few concepts in Ilm-ul-Balaaghah is essential. You must have completed a few basic works on Balaaghah.
7. Plenty details in the brief explanation of the verses are incomprehensible without getting an explanation from the marginal notes. Often, the marginal notes are limited and you have to refer to other sources for clarification. Among the best of sources in Arabic are:

1. *Haashiyat-us-Saawi ala Jalaalain* (Various prints)
2. *Haashiyat-ul-Jamal ala Jalaalain* (Various prints)

For those knowing Urdu, the Urdu commentary titled Kamaalain is very good. However, the one print which I have is very poor in regard to the *Ihraab* (placement of the diacritical signs – fatha – damma, etc) on the various words of the tafsir. Despite this, the text of the tafsir with the *Ihraab* is very helpful for the non-urdu speaking person as well.

Those who do not have access to the Arabic or urdu commentaries of Jalaalain, can also learn the commentary through other good tafasir. Sometimes, details in the other commentaries help to clear any misunderstandings that we have of the text of Jalaalain as well as clarify the meanings of certain matters in the text of Jalaalain. It is absolutely essential for those who teach Jalaalain to study the Arabic commentaries of Jalaalain.

8. Jalaalain is not meant to be a tafsir that deals with the verses of Ahkaam. Therefore, since the madhahib have differed in regard to the Ahkaam of the verses, it is essential that the verses pertaining to Ahkaam are studied through other tafasir which specifically deal with the verses pertaining to the Ahkaam or, if the person who is studying the text is a follower of a particular madhhab, he may read the tafsir of the verses of the Ahkaam through a tafsir that specifically gives interpretation of the verses of ahkaam in terms of a specific madhhab. Thus, a Hanafi may refer to Ahkaam-ul-Quraan by Abu Bakr Jassaas. A Maaliki may refer to Ahkaam-ul-Quraan by Ibn ul Arabi, and a scholar who deals with all the Madhahib can compare various interpretations of the Aayaatul-Ahkaam from various tafāsir and works of fiqh.
9. There are very few places in the tafsir, where the Mufasssiraan (two Mufasssirs who compiled the Jalalain) have erred e.g. details pertaining to geography and astronomy e.g. the claim that the scholars of the Shariah view the earth to be flat and not round. This might have been limited to a specific era due to a limitation in knowledge.
10. There are many verses pertaining to the Sifāt of Allah, or the Being of Allah which are interpreted in a manner that the early Mufasssiraan have allowed.

The emergent Saudi Salafi philosophy on these matters differs, these interpretation of Imam Suyuti are considered by them as divergent from the correct position. They therefore interpret the certain verses dealing with the attributes of Allah in a manner different from other scholars. These issues should be noted as it has become a matter of serious contention and takfeer in the Arab world. We can safely say that the salafis make takfeer of those who are Ashari in Aqeedah. This is a dangerous position since many great and classical Ulama of the Shafi madhhab were Ashari in Aqeedah.

11. One Shafi scholar asked me “Why is Jalaalain taught in the Hanafi institutions?” I can only answer by saying, “Allah Rabbul Izzah, in His great wisdom has given acceptance to certain works in certain periods of time and in certain places. Therefore, He has also allowed the efforts of these great pious scholars to continue to provide benefit to the Ummah.”
12. Indeed, understanding Jalaalain is a gateway to the larger Tafāsir.

13. Since the Quran was revealed in seven dialects, some verses can be read in alternative manners. This pertains to the science of Qiraa'ah. A basic study of Sab'ah Qirah is essential to understand the alternative readings of the Quran.

Listening to the various forms of alternative readings on cassette, cd , mp3 etc in conjunction with looking into a Quraan would give you an introduction in this regard. You can thus listen to a Warsh recital of Shaikh Khalil Husri or any other Shaikh in order to get an introduction in this field.